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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000926

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TREASURY FOR OTI - RLOEFFLER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/20/2017

TAGS: EFIN KNNP IR TU

SUBJECT: PUSHING TURKEY TO IMPLEMENT UNSC SANCTIONS ON IRAN; READOUT ON MOTTAKI VISIT

REF: A. ANKARA 777

- 1B. STATE 40440
- 1C. STATE 40909
- 1D. STATE 37801

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary. Following up on earlier demarches, Ambassador met April 19 with Foreign Ministry Middle East Director General Bozkurt Aran to keep the pressure on Turkey to implement UNSC Resolutions 1737 and 1747. Bozkurt said the process of adopting a Council of Ministers implementing decree (or decrees) is still underway, but that the Turkish bank regulator had alerted banks to be on the lookout for assets or transactions involving Bank Sepah or other entities named in the Resolution annexes. Aran said he would look into information that Sepah has a correspondent relationship with Turkish Halk Bank, but thought that it was otherwise unlikely that assets covered by the Resolutions were located in Turkey. Aran said Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki's surprise April 17 visit to Ankara and meetings with FM Gul and PM Erdogan seemed to him to have been mostly for show. On the nuclear issue, he said Mottaki had proposed that Ali Larijani and Javier Solana meet in Istanbul, which didn't make, he thought, much sense. End Summary.

UNSC Resolution Implementation

12. (C) Aran assured Ambassador that Turkey is completely committed to implementing UNSCR 1737 and 1747 sanctions on Iran. He explained that the internal legal procedure of obtaining the Council of Ministers decrees required to block and freeze accounts was not yet complete. This took time in itself, and the MFA is also watching to see how the EU implements the resolutions. Nevertheless, the MFA, he said, is working to move the process along and will not wait for EU action. He noted that Turkey is not a producer of any of the items on the UNSCR lists, and said it is Turkey's position that producer countries -- not just transit countries like Turkey -- should be pressed to implement the Resolutions.

13. (C) Ambassador noted that he had raised the issue two weeks earlier with MFA Under Secretary Apakan (ref A) and again within the last week. Stressing the importance of Bank Sepah, he said time is of the essence in dealing with financial issues. It is also important that Turkey demonstrate to Iran that it is part of the international consensus forged at the United Nations. Recalling Under Secretary Levey's visit, Aran claimed that banks in Turkey

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had been alerted by the lead Turkish bank regulator (the Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency - BDDK) to be on the lookout for accounts or transactions involving Bank Sepah or other individuals or entities in the UNSCR annexes. In fact, he said the Iranian embassy had complained that BDDK had sent such a letter to another Iranian bank that has an office in Turkey. More generally, Aran doubted that any of the people or entities named by the UN, with the possible exception of one individual who is a member of a joint committee responsible for border security, had any connection at all with Turkey. (Note: this may be a reference to IRGC General and Deputy Interior Minister Zolqadr, with whom the Turks have contacts related to PKK and other border incidents.)

¶4. (C) Aran said he would look into the specific information (ref B) that Sepah has a correspondent relationship with Turkish Halk Bank and get back to Ambassador if that is the case.

Surprise Mottaki Visit

¶5. (C) Asked by the Ambassador about Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki's surprise April 17 visit to Ankara, Aran said the visited was unexpected and entirely an Iranian initiative. He said nothing new or of much substance was discussed. For Iran, he said, the fact that it be seen to be having meetings is often what is important. As reported septel, discussion of the upcoming Iraq Neighbors meeting in Egypt dominated a 90-minute lunch and meeting with FM Gul and a brief follow-on meeting with PM Erdogan.

¶6. (C) On the nuclear issue, Aran said Mottaki proposed that Larijani and EU High Rep Solana meet in Istanbul.

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Mottaki said Iran is ready to talk, but made clear that it would bring nothing new to the table, such as an agreement to suspend enrichment. Aran said Gul took a tough line and said that Ahmadinejad's recent announcement that enrichment technologies have been mastered is the perfect excuse to declare victory, suspend enrichment and enter into real talks. He downplayed the Istanbul meeting proposal, saying that Larijani and Solana meet all the time and the venue is not important. In any case, Aran said that Turkey did not believe Mottaki was a decisionmaker on nuclear issues: althought he foreign ministry is part of the process, it does not have the lead, he said.

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